

REMARKS

The specification has been reviewed, and a clerical error of the specification has been amended.

In the Action, claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 or under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) by Allie, Wellen et al., Murata and JP '400.

In view of the rejections, claim 1 has been amended to clarify the structure of the invention. Claim 2 has been cancelled, and dependency of claim 5 has been amended. New claims 6-10 have been filed. The features now recited in amended and new claims are described in the specification or shown in the drawings. Therefore, the amendments do not introduce new matter.

A sealing plug for sealing a hole portion of a panel of the invention basically comprises a flange portion for contacting a periphery around the hole portion, a cylindrical body extending from the flange portion to be inserted in the hole portion, a straight portion formed on a part of an outer peripheral surface of the cylindrical body to extend parallel to an axis line of the cylindrical body, a step portion or step members projecting from the outer peripheral surface of the cylindrical body at a side opposite to the straight portion, and a neck portion formed between the step portion and the flange portion and having a diameter substantially same as an inner diameter of the hole portion.

In claim 1, the step portion abuts against the peripheral edge of the hole portion when the straight portion passes through the hole portion to allow the cylindrical body to incline with respect to a center line and holds the peripheral edge of the hole portion together with the flange portion. The step portion has a lower surface inclined with respect to a surface perpendicular to the axis line of the cylindrical body and extending from the side opposite to the straight portion to a portion near the straight

portion so that the lower surface extends from a portion away from the flange portion to a portion close to the flange portion.

In claim 9, a plurality of step members is spaced part from each other in a peripheral direction of the cylindrical body and projects from the outer peripheral surface thereof to surround the straight portion. Each of the step members has a circular arc shape projecting outwardly from the outer peripheral surface and becomes narrower downwardly away from the flange while a height gradually decreases.

In Allie, three retainers 26 are formed around a shank 12 to be spaced part from each other. The retainer 26 has an outer surface gradually decreasing toward downwardly, but there is no lower surface as defined in claim 1. Namely, Allie does not have a lower surface inclined with respect to a surface perpendicular to the axis line of the cylindrical body and extending from the side opposite to the straight portion to a portion near the straight portion so that the lower surface extends from a portion away from the flange portion to a portion close to the flange portion.

Also, Allie has the retainers 26. However, each retainer 26 does not have the shape of the invention. Namely, the retainer 26 is different from each of the step members having a circular arc shape projecting outwardly from the outer peripheral surface and becoming narrower downwardly away from the flange while a height gradually decreases.

In Wellen et al., a rail plug includes a guide bar 16 on one side of a planar panel 14, and teeth 18, 24, 26 on the other three sides of the planar panel 14. Each tooth has a lower surface extending perpendicular to a central axis of the planner panel 14. Therefore, there is no lower surface inclined with respect to a surface perpendicular to the axis line of the cylindrical body and extending from the side opposite to the straight portion to a portion near the straight portion so that the lower surface extends

from a portion away from the flange portion to a portion close to the flange portion, as defined in claim 1 of the invention.

Also, each tooth 18, 24 or 26 does not have a circular arc shape projecting outwardly from the outer peripheral surface and becoming narrower downwardly away from the flange while a height gradually decreases, as defined in claim 9 of the invention.

In Murata, a plurality of protrusions 30 projects outwardly from a cylindrical leg portion 14. Each protrusion 30 has a lower surface inclined upwardly, but the lower surface does not incline with respect to a surface perpendicular to the axis line of the cylindrical body and extend from the side opposite to the straight portion to a portion near the straight portion so that the lower surface extends from a portion away from the flange portion to a portion close to the flange portion, as defined in claim 1 of the invention. Also, each protrusion 30 does not have a shape as defined in claim 9.

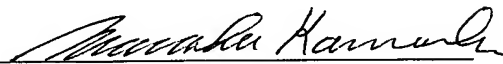
In JP '400, a plug includes an outer wall 12 with a flange 13, and a projection 15 disposed inside the outer wall 12 to form a space therebetween. An engaging groove 14 is formed in the outer wall 12 to completely surround the outer wall 12. The outer wall 12 containing the groove 14 has a flat lower portion or bottom. Therefore, there are no step portion inclined as defined in claim 1 nor protrusion with a specific shape as defined in claim 9.

As explained above, the features as recited in claims 1 and 9 of the invention are not disclosed in the cited references. Even if the cited references are combined, claims are not obvious from the cited references.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

HAUPTMAN KANESAKA BERNER
PATENT AGENTS, LLP

By 
Manabu Kanesaka
Reg. No. 31,467
Agent for Applicants

1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 310
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 519-9785